



Approved (5/14/18)

SerVermont Commission Meeting

7 March 2018

12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Cherry Conference Room, Waterbury State Office Complex

Members in Attendance, Christy Gallese, Peter Hayward, Dan Noyes, Bob McCabe, Kate Larose, Lee White, Jason Gosselin, Doug Kievit-Kylar

Members in Attendance via Phone: Betsy Ward, Guy Isabelle, Susan Cheesman, Tyler Davis, Nicole Whalen, Benji Thurber

Staff in Attendance: Philip Kolling, Robyn Baylor (Sharon Hearne was absent due to illness)

12:00 pm Welcome, Introductions

Phil welcomed everyone, lead round-table introductions, and asked each commissioner to answer...

- What is your biggest question about being a commissioner?

Brief responses follow:

Peter: How can we best help commissioners develop the skills they need in order to be as much of an asset as possible to support staff and the program?

Dan: What can we do as a group to build community services in Vermont?

Jason: What can we do to help to enhance emergency preparedness both pre- and post-disaster?

Bob: What can we do to alleviate/reduce bureaucracy of this organization?

Kate: What would be a useful role for commissioners to play? (Does the past offer insights?)

Phil: What can I do to best help you as commissioners grow?

Betsy: How can I best be of use to support staff?

Tyler: What are the most important attributes/skills/characteristics that commissioners have brought to the table?

Guy: How can we best support staff and on a broader scale, promote volunteerism in Vermont?

Benji: It would be helpful to learn about the history or the organization and its strategic planning process?

Phil noted that there were present 11 voting members and, thus, a quorum.

12:20 pm Approve Minutes

Two sets of minutes, October and December, of 2017 required review and approval. Jason moved adoption and approval of the

October meeting minutes and Lee seconded the motion. Vote was taken and there was unanimous approval (other than Kate’s abstention).

Guy moved adoption and approval of the December meeting minutes and Christy seconded the motion. Vote was taken and there was unanimous approval (other than Kate’s abstention).

12:30 pm Officer Elections

Commissioners voted for the slate of officers...with results reported later in the meeting.

12:40 pm Public Comment Period

Phil reminded commissioners that meeting are subject to the open meeting law, that public attendance was encouraged, and that meeting times and locations were publicized. No one from the public was in attendance and thus no comments were noted.

12:50 pm New Data

Phil began the presentation of new data by providing a wrap-up of 2017:

2017 Wrap Up

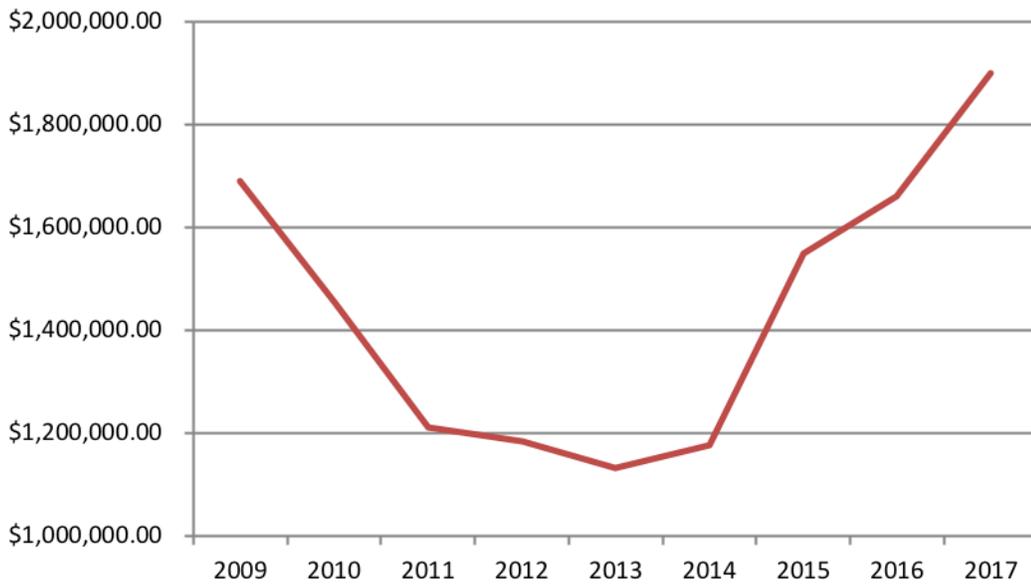
Final for 2016-2017 Program Year

	2016						
	MSY Awd.	MSY Enr.	MSY Unf.	% MSY enr	Slot Awd.	Slots Fill	Slots Unf
VHCB	29.94	29.94	0	100%	41	41	0
LEAP	19.11	18.58	0.53	97%	40	38	2
VYDC	25.92	24.54	1.38	95%	44	42	2
CEDO	7.5	7	0.5	93%	10	9	1
ECO	24	24	0	100%	24	24	0
VHEC	6.76	6.38	0.38	94%	18	17	1
VYCC	15.62	15.62	0	100%	36	36	0
TOTAL	128.85	126.06			213	207	
		98%				97%	

In particular, Phil noted MSY and Slot Fulfillment. Both of these were nearly 100%!!!!!! Phil reminded commissioners that VHEC was under-enrolled and then rightsized, and that commissioners approved a disincentive that penalized programs with less than 90% enrollment. This may have contributed to the very positive outcomes, but only time will tell for sure. The attrition effect was briefly discussed, but it was agreed that this was largely beyond our control or control of the directors. As currently understood, exiting the program is allowable only with personally compelling reasons (and in such cases, benefits are prorated). As will be discussed later, CNCS redefined program compliance as 85% enrollment, rather than 100%.

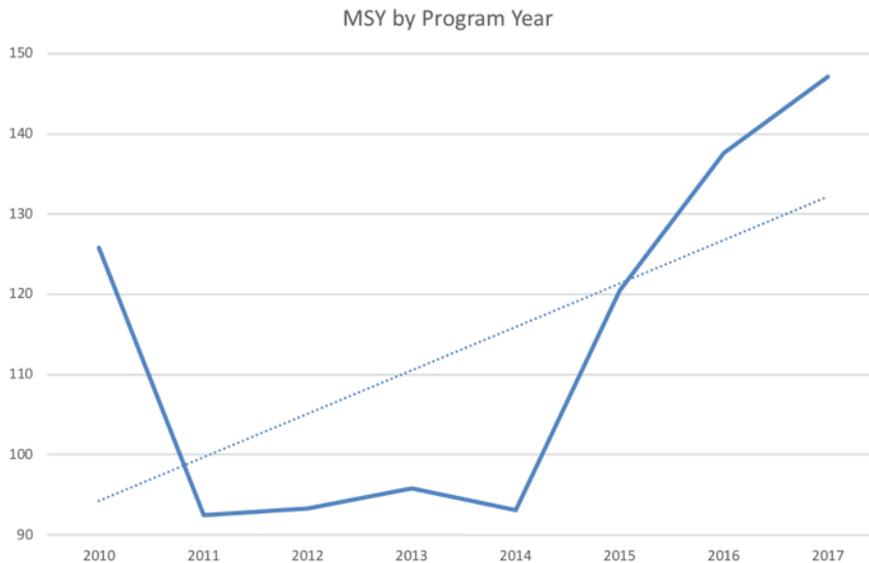
Phil reviewed for commissioners how funding has trended historically:

AmeriCorps Funding



\$2,223,587 Currently Under Consideration by CNCS

Phil also reviewed the historic trend for MSY by Program Year (see below). Jason asked what factors may have contributed to the growth in MSY beginning in 2014. Phil noted that it was 2014 that CNCS announced and promoted the Governors & Mayors Initiative. This program prompted Vermont DEC to put forward the ECO Program, which received funding. Phil and Sharon both committed also to work with applicants to reword language and address budget and other shortcomings in their applications. This served to strengthen and improved the likelihood that Vermont proposals received funding. In addition, commissioners approved planning grants that – in some cases – bore fruit as funded proposals afterward. ReSource is an example of just such a program. That CNCS has streamlined the application (now with boilerplate sections now integrated into the assurances section) may also help. Finally, it was mentioned that the continuity of staff has been a very real benefit to applicants and to Vermonters. Robyn has now been with SerVermont for four years and both Sharon and Phil have seven year tenures with the organization.



Phil presented current enrollment figures (see table, below) noting that there exists a two month difference between the 2017 and

2018 tables and that March and April are traditionally BIG months for recruiting members. The VYCC enrollment figure is also NOT a concern owing to the fact that these are summer slots that historically get filled later than March. Phil expressed his belief that all programs are on track or have a plan to fully enroll members. Kate asked how program directors can learn from one another. Phil explained that a primary tool for sharing expertise is the monthly program director meetings. Doug asked if there was some formal way to capture best practices and Phil replied that there were such mechanisms but that they were always looking for ways to improve on these.

Current Year Enrollment

March 2018

	Slot Awd.	Slots Fill	% Slots	MSY Award	MSY Enrolled	% MSY
VHCB	39	31	79%	30.01	27	90%
LEAP	36	13	36%	18.56	10.53	57%
VYDC	44	22	50%	28.63	20.5	72%
CEDO	20	12	60%	15	7	47%
ECO	24	24	100%	24	24	100%
ReSource	32	19	59%	13.52	10.38	77%
VYCC	40	2	5%	17.37	2	12%

April 2017

	Slot Awd.	Slots Fill	%
VHCB	41	38	93%
LEAP	30	15	50%
VYDC	27	20	74%
CEDO	10	9	90%
ECO	24	24	100%
VHEC	51	6	12%
VYCC	35	8	23%

Note: Early March 2018 vs. late April 2017.

As of 3/6/2018

Phil projected and discussed the following three slides presenting data collected and analyzed by CNCS:

BUILDING BETTER LIVES

A field experiment found **24%** of resumes listing AmeriCorps service received a call back for an interview, compared to **17%** of resumes without a service record

AmeriCorps grantee Teach for America improves students' standardized test scores by the equivalent of an additional **2.6** months of learning

46% of new Senior Corps volunteers report improvements in health and wellbeing after just one year

63% who "often" felt alone reported decreased feelings of isolation

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

The University of Texas at Austin found national service programs

STRENGTHEN THE OVERALL HEALTH OF COMMUNITIES

As a result, citizens in communities with AmeriCorps programming express

FEWER NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS

CNCS-funded programs also

IMPROVE RETURNS on taxpayer investments

Another AmeriCorps grantee, Reading Partners, demonstrated

\$980 IN COST SAVINGS PER STUDENT, compared to schools operating similar programs

EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION

Evidence and evaluation are core values at CNCS and ORE – values that we use to help other organizations

BECOME MORE EFFICIENT

A study of CNCS grantees revealed improvements in **13** of **14** indicators of organizational and evaluation capacity

Since 2015, CNCS has used

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS EVIDENCE to make grants that:

- TRAIN AND EMPLOY WORKERS
- EDUCATE CHILDREN
- BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE
- IMPROVE HEALTH

NOTE: Dan mentioned that he is pushing surveys out the door to collect similar data on Senior Corps.

Phil projected for commissioners (on following page) an excerpt from the President’s budget citing elimination of CNCS. Dan noted for new commissioners that this was not likely something to take overly seriously at this point in time as this is something that has been proposed in the past – without much success.

ELIMINATION: CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
Other Independent Agencies

The Budget proposes to eliminate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and provide funding for the orderly shutdown of the Agency. Funding community service and subsidizing the operation of nonprofit organizations is outside the role of the Federal Government. To the extent these activities have value, they should be supported by the nonprofit and private sectors and not with Federal subsidies provided through the complex Federal grant structure run by CNCS.

Funding Summary
 (In millions of dollars)

	2017 Enacted	2019 Request	2019 Change from 2017
Budget Authority.....	1,030	123	-907

Justification

CNCS is a grant-making agency that funds service opportunities, promotes volunteering, and helps nonprofit organizations engage volunteers. Members funded through CNCS grants typically receive a living allowance and education award of over \$5,000 for their service. While some of the programs supported by CNCS grants have demonstrated effectiveness, and CNCS has made progress in evaluating its programs, some of the Agency's programs struggle to measure and demonstrate their impact. In addition, the Agency has struggled to effectively implement complex program requirements and has faced significant management challenges.

Funding community service and subsidizing the operation of non-profit organizations is outside the proper role of the Federal Government. Over 60 million Americans perform volunteer activities in their communities each year, absent subsidies from the Federal Government, and would likely continue to do so after CNCS is eliminated.¹ Programs currently funded by CNCS that demonstrate value should be able to compete successfully for funding from individual donors and the nonprofit and private sectors.

Phil projected a chart showing ASC's (America's Service Commissions) funding recommendations – and reviewed each budget category:



Association
 Recommendations

	FY 2018	FY 2019
AmeriCorps State & Nat.	438	537
State Commission Support	22	23
Commission Investment	10	11
Volunteer Generation	15	20
Serve America Fellows	15	20

Phil discussed SerVermont financials noting, in particular, that General Fund and In-Kind Service money is what go to create match

money for the organization. Phil explained also that Commission Investment money has been used to build program/commissioner capacity.



SerVermont Financials

	FY 2017	FY 2018
General Fund	\$75,000	\$75,000
State Commission Support	\$ 257,000 (small state)	\$ 250,000 (or more)
Commission Investment	\$ 90,090 (small state)	\$?
Volunteer Generation	\$0	\$? If formula awarded
Serve America Fellows	N/A	\$? For small states
AmeriCorps State Formula	\$ 653,000 (pop. Based)	
AmeriCorps State Comp.	\$ 1,255,425	

1:30 pm Partners & Plans: Activities and Updates

Robyn was given opportunity to provide an update on VISTA. She reported that applications for host sites come due on Friday and that she was asked to find more host sites prepared and willing to help address the opioid epidemic in Vermont. Robyn noted that she currently has 48 letters of intent for 25 slots and that she is particularly excited about an effort by OEO and a coalition of organizations addressing homelessness in Vermont are working to explore the nexus between homelessness and opioid addiction...and how to best support those in need. She mentioned how a strong jobs market makes it more challenging to enroll members.

Phil next provided a CNCS update that included...

- New CEO of the Corporation confirmed - Barbara Stewart
- Rolling our efficiency plan soon

Phil next provided an AmeriCorps update that included...

- Retention rule change to 85% (will increase program compliance with retention requirement – now more realistic)
- Trained all programs on staff background checks
- Expect more changes with new CNCS staff

Phil reviewed who's who on the current commission noting which term they were in (in parenthesis) and the year their term expires.

This leaves the program with the following...

- 15 voting commissioners (meets minimum)
 - One term-off to fill
- Looking for a school-aged youth
- Looking for a current member in a national service program

Phil went on to discuss the CNCS/OIG Audit noting that...

Current Commission

- Thomas Hark (2) 2017
- Jason Gosselin (2) 2019
- Betsy Ward (2) 2019
- Doug Kievit-Kylar (2) 2019
- Bob McCabe (1) 2019
- Nicole Whalen (1) 2019
- J. Guy Isabelle (1) 2019
- Benji Thurber (1) 2019
- Tyler Davis (1) 2019
- Christy Gallese (2) 2020
- Daniel Noyes (2) 2020
- Megan McKeever (1) 2020
- Lee White (1) 2020
- Kate Larose (1) 2020
- Heather Bouchey – Designated - Voting
- Susan Cheesman – CNCS Ex-Officio
- Peter Hayward - Ex-Officio

- Field Work January 17 through February 2
- Visited us, Lyndon State, and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

Initial / Current Findings SerVermont

1. Background Checks - Staff
2. Record Retention – no policy

NOTE: Phil, Sharon & Robyn have all had background checks for AHS for purposes of employment but do not have national sex offender website background check. (have signed document that they would go through the process before hiring). ALSO, AHS has no record retention policy, but instead, a general records schedule.

Initial / Current Findings Lyndon State

1. Financial Reporting – late report – RESOLVED
2. Member Living Allowance – discrepancy between member agreement and living allowance rate
3. Staff and Member Background Checks

Initial / Current Findings VHCB

1. Employee Background Checks
2. Questioned Unallowable Activities – benefitting a for-profit corporation
3. Electronic Availability of Supporting Files

Phil offered commissioners an overview of ASC (an organization of which we are a member and for which Phil serves on the board) He shared the following...



Mission: Lead and elevate the state service network.

Vision: That all states will embrace service as a strategy to build community in solving local challenges

Values: Unity, Bipartisanship, Devolution

Core Focus Areas:

- Commission Capacity Building
- Federal Advocacy
- Activation of the State Network

Christy next offered an overview of her trip with Phil to Washington, D.C.. She explained that she and Phil met with other Executive Directors. Christy noted how she sensed the earned respect other E.D.s had for Phil. Representatives of ASC were in attendance and that ASC would be the gatekeeper for new ideas. She also mentioned that there seemed to be excitement for the new CNCS CEO. Christy and Phil also had opportunity to meet with Sanders and Leahy staffers to talk about the program and to census their issues and concerns. Consensus seemed to focus on how volunteers and AmeriCorps (and VISTA) members could help address opioid addiction in Vermont. Another point that was brought up was the need to continue the discussion of how best to address the needs of 18 – 24 year-olds post high school and, in particular, those with no plans to attend either college or a trade school. The role that community service might play in the lives of these youth was considered as an option.

2:30 pm Commission Role Discussion

Phil opened the discussion of the role commissioners play in the organization by clarifying expectations...

Commissioner Role and Expectations

- Are not specifically defined in our Executive Order or CNCS Law
- Vary around the country
- Update State Service Plan
- Administer grant programs (AmeriCorps)
- Provide technical assistance to nonprofits
- Make Vermonters aware of opportunities to serve in national service programs

- Attend Meetings
 - 75% attendance (3 of 4)
 - Teleconferencing available
 - Consistent location
- Participate in Grant Review and Decision Making
- Site Visits (optional)
- Committee work (as needed and able and appointed by chair)

- Adopt a goal (from the State Service Plan)
- Actively promote AmeriCorps / National Service
- Identify as a Commissioners
- Attend events as able
 - Recognition day
 - May and Fall conferences

As a side note, Bob requested that a listing of the sites where AmeriCorps (and VISTA) members currently serve would be useful; allowing for visits by commissioners.

3:00 pm State Service Plan Discussion

Phil opened a discussion of the SerVermont State Service Plan with the following...

State Service Plan

1. Increase Opportunities to Serve in VT
 - Develop new AmeriCorps Programs
 - Build the capacity of current programs
 - Increase available funding
2. Strengthen nonprofits through service
 - Build volunteer management capacity
 - Train AmeriCorps members
 - Build performance measurement capacity of grantees

3. Increase awareness of service as a resource in solving community challenges.

- Recognize Vermonters through Governor's Service Awards
- Share Stories of Service
- Promote service as a solution to community challenges through PSAs

Phil introduced questions commissioners may want to consider as we consider an update to the State Service Plan:

State Service Plan 2019-2021

What do we want to focus on?

How to we want to solicit input from the public and partners?

Where are our gaps?

3:50 pm Upcoming Events & Election Results

Phil discussed briefly the following upcoming events:

- AmeriCorps Week – March 11-17
- Audit Exit Conference – ?
- National Service Day of Recognition & Governor's Service Awards – April 3
- Commission Meeting – Funding – May 14
- End of Service Conference – Week of May 21

Phil also reported the results of officer elections...

- Commission Chair – Christy Gallese
- Vice Chair - Jason Gosselin
- Treasurer - Lee White
- Secretary - Doug Kievit-Kylar

4:00 pm Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted,



Doug Kievit-Kylar
Secretary